ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts General laws, Chapter 30A, Section 20, notice is hereby given for the following meeting of the:

Arlington School Committee
Curriculum Instruction Accountability and Assessment
Monday, October 25, 2021
3:30 PM

Conducted by Remote Participation via Zoom https://www.mass.gov/doc/order-suspending-certain-provision-of-open-meeting-law/download

You are invited to a Zoom webinar.
When: Oct 25, 2021 03:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Topic: Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Accountability Subcommittee Meeting

Register in advance for this webinar:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_weX1nIcXS3ubZh1r1UQSRw

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Open Meeting (L. Kardon)

Public Participation

Science camp planning update (R. MacNeal)

Heterogeneous grouping planning update and feedback from Committee (M. Janger)

DLD update to committee (E. Homan)

New Business

Adjournment

The listings of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair, which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

Stated times and time amounts, listed in parenthesis, are the estimated amount of time for that particular agenda item. Actual times may be shorter or longer depending on the time needed to fully explore the topic.

Submitted by Len Kardon, Chair

Correspondence Received

Email to SC from J. Swan, Question for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Accountability Subcommittee Meeting, 10-25-21

Massachusetts law requires all open session meetings of public bodies to be accessible to members of the public, including those with disabilities. If you need reasonable accommodations in order to participate in the meeting, contact the Administrative Assistant to the Arlington School Committee Liz Diggins at ediggins@arlington.k12.ma.us.

Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Meeting Location

Summary:
Conducted by Remote Participation via Zoom https://www.mass.gov/doc/order-suspending-certain-provision-of-open-meeting-law/download

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Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Open Meeting (L. Kardon)

ATTACHMENTS:

	Type	File Name	Description
🗋	Reference Material	Open_Meeting_Attachment_-_1_Conducted_by_Remote_Participation_us_-_Attachment_1_for_EVERY_agenda.pdf	Open Meeting Attachment 1
🗋	Reference Material	Open_Meeting_Attachment_-_2_Remote_Meeting_Script_-_Attachment_3_-_for_EVERY_agenda.pdf	Open Meeting Attachment 2
🗋	Reference Material	Open_Meeting_Attachment_-_3_DRAFT_SCRIPT_FOR_REMOTELY_CONDUCTED_OPEN_MEETINGS.pdf	Open Meeting Attachment 3
🗋	Reference Material	Open_Meeting_Attachment_-_4_Supplement_re_Remote_Participation_During_Coronavirus_State_of_Emergency_-_Checklist_and_Script.pdf_-_Attachment_4_-_for_EVERY_agenda.pdf	Open Meeting Attachment 4

Conducted by Remote Participation

https://www.mass.gov/doc/order-suspending-certain-provision-of-open-meeting-law/download

DRAFT SCRIPT FOR REMOTELY CONDUCTED OPEN MEETINGS

Confirming Member Access:

As a preliminary matter, this is [identify meeting manager – Chair, support staff, etc.]. Permit me to confirm that all members and persons anticipated on the agenda are present and can hear me.

- Members, when I call your name, please respond in the affirmative. *State each members' name.*
- Staff, when I call your name, please respond in the affirmative. *State each staff members' name.*
- Anticipated Speakers on the Agenda, please respond in the affirmative. *State each anticipated speakers' name.*

Introduction to Remote Meeting:

Good morning/afternoon/evening. This Open Meeting of [Insert Public Body Name] is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the "COVID-19 Virus."

In order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 Virus, we have been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend public gatherings, and as such, the Governor's Order suspends the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible *physical* location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely.

The Order, which you can find posted with agenda materials for this meeting allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting.

Ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. This meeting [will/will not] feature public comment.

For this meeting, [Insert Public Body Name] is convening by [telephone conference/video conference via Zoom App/Facebook Live/etc.] as posted on the Town's Website identifying how the public may join.

For "Zoom" Meetings

Please note that this meetings is being recorded, and that some attendees are participating by video conference.

Accordingly, please be aware that other folks may be able to see you, and that take care not to "screen share" your computer. Anything that you broadcast may be captured by the recording.

Meeting Materials

*For Novus Agenda-Supported Meetings: All of the materials for this meeting, except any Executive Session materials, are available on the Novus Agenda dashboard, and we recommend the members and the public follow the agenda as posted on Novus unless I/The Chair notes otherwise.

*For Non-Novus Supported Meetings: All supporting materials that have been provided members of this body are available on the Town's website unless otherwise noted. The public is encouraged to follow along using the posted agenda unless I/The Chair notes otherwise.

Meeting Business Ground Rules

We are now turning to the first item on the agenda. Before we do so, permit me to cover some ground rules for effective and clear conduct of our business and to ensure accurate meeting minutes.

- I/the Chair, will introduce each speaker on the agenda. After they conclude their remarks, the Chair will go down the line of Members, inviting each by name to provide any comment, questions, or motions. Please hold until your name is called. Further,

- Please remember to mute your phone or computer when you are not speaking;
- Please remember to speak clearly and in a way that helps generate accurate minutes

- For any response, please wait until the Chair yields the floor to you, and state your name before speaking.

- If members wish to engage in colloquy with other members, please do so through the Chair, taking care to identify yourself.

- For Items with Public Comment:

  After members have spoken, the Chair will afford public comment as follows:

  - The Chair will first ask members of the public who wish to speak to identify their names and addresses only;

  - Once the Chair has a list of all public commentators, I will call on each by name and afford 3 minutes for any comments.

- Finally, *each vote taken in this meeting will be conducted by roll call vote.*

[Any additional preliminary comments tailored to meetings]

REMOTE PARTICIPATION MEETING CHECKLIST

In Advance of Meeting

- ☐ All non-emergency items properly posted *at least* 48 hours in advance
- ☐ "Executive Order on Remote Participation" is posted with agenda
- ☐ All members received the same documents for meeting
- ☐ Supporting documents posted on Novus or Town website (does not have to be 48 hours in advance unless required by law)
- ☐ For meetings with public participation, encourage written public comments

Initiating Meeting

- ☐ Confirm that all Members are present and can hear each other
- ☐ Read Preamble to Remote Meetings
- ☐ Note materials for meeting available online through Novus or Town website for the public
- ☐ Introduce all members, staff, and persons on the agenda
- ☐ Cover "ground rules"

For "Zoom" Meetings

- ☐ Disable Chat Function for Participants
- ☐ Click "Record Meeting"
- ☐ Advise Participants that Meeting is Being Recorded
- ☐ Caution Participants About Screen Sharing

During Meeting

- ☐ Each speaker states their name before each presentation, comment, or question
- ☐ All votes taken by roll call
- ☐ Meeting Minutes reflect remote status

Technical Difficulties

- ☐ If technical difficulties arise, Chair suspends meeting while attempts to resolve are made
- ☐ Keep accurate minutes noting any disconnections and reconnections of members

Town of Arlington
Legal Department

Douglas W. Heim
Town Counsel

50 Pleasant Street
Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781.316.3150
Fax: 781.316.3159
E-mail: dheim@town.arlington.ma.us
Website: www.arlingtonma.gov

To: Select Board

Cc: Town Committees and Commissions; Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager; John Leone, Town Moderator

From: Douglas W. Heim, Town Counsel

Date: March 18, 2020

Re: Supplement – Remote Meeting Checklist and Guidance

Please receive this Supplement to the Memoranda from this Office of March 11, 2020, and March 13, 2020 regarding the Town's options for conducting meetings during the coronavirus (or "COVID-19") State of Emergency in the Commonwealth.

As you will recall, meetings by telephone or video conference during the State of Emergency may proceed with all participants engaging remotely, so long as "alternative means of public access" is provided.[1] Public access can be provided by allowing the public to call in or otherwise join meetings remotely so that they can see and/or hear what takes place at remote participation meetings. To assist you in availing yourselves of these options, this Office has developed a checklist and script for Chairs and administrative support staff for remotely

[1] Certain hearings require additional consideration where public comment and/or participation is required.

conducted open meetings which you will find attached. These documents are intended as guides primarily to ensure the following:

- Accurate meeting minutes can be recorded;
- All other requirements of the Open Meeting Law are met;
- The public understands the modifications to the Open Meeting Law during the State of Emergency; and
- Chairs are able to effectively used new technologies such as the “Zoom” app effectively.

Please keep in mind that unlike some other users of teleconference or videoconference technology, it is essentially that a government body’s business can be accurately understood and recorded in meeting minutes, and that the public can follow along.

If specific circumstances of your meeting require further counsel, such as conducting an executive session by remote meeting, please contact this Office at your convenience for further support.

Public Participation

Science camp planning update (R. MacNeal)

Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Heterogeneous grouping planning update and feedback from Committee (M. Janger)

ATTACHMENTS:

	Type	File Name	Description
🗋	Presentation	HGI_data_presentation_scc.pdf	HGI Data Presentation

Heterogeneous Grouping Initiative (HGI)

- Arlington High School
- Presentation to the Curriculum Subcommittee

- Oct 25, 2021

Context

Ongoing AHS efforts to promote equity and inclusion:

- Elimination of Gen Ed. Curriculum B
- Institution of Co-Taughts

Pandemic provided a natural experiment that replaced levelled separate classes with heterogeneous, embedded honors in 2020-2021

Context

Pandemic provided a natural experiment that replaced levelled separate classes with heterogeneous, embedded honors in 2020-2021

Department	Primarily Remote
English	9 - Foundations Hetero 10 - Expressions Hetero
Math	Geometry Hetero
History	9 - Modern World Hetero 10 - US 1 Hetero 11 - US 2 Hetero & AP US History
Science	Physical Science Hetero

Why heterogeneous grouping?

- Ability-grouped classes have been the subject of more study than nearly any other structure in public education (Alexander, 2003)
- Meta-analyses of the last *100 years* of research on ability grouping (Saiying Steenbergen-Hu *et al*, 2016) is that it does not benefit students on either end of the performance spectrum.
- Contributes to fixed mindset, racial and gender disparities
- For students in lower tracks: Diminished academic achievement and self-concept, greater behavioral problems.

Why heterogeneous grouping?

- For students in upper tracks: Resistance to academic risk-taking, limited opportunity for diversity of perspectives, minimal data that learning benefits.
- Students in honors-level classes often shut down when they encounter challenging work.
- Tracking tends to reward product, not process or not deep learning: "I did it, I got the answer" → "We have kids who are good at math *class*, but not at *math.*"
- Ability grouping fails to recognize or adapt to the neurological complexity of learning and the diversity of learning difference even within "grouped" classes.
    - In a system of levelled classes, both high performers and struggling students are, in different ways, being denied opportunities for deep learning.

Why heterogeneous grouping?

- More accurate understanding of what higher level learning actually entails.

  ”Honors” should be a label attached to the *complexity of the learning*, not to the *student* or to the *class* in which that student is enrolled.

  The goal is not to have more “honors students” – the goal is to have more students *engaging in honors-level learning*.

Timeline

September

Initial meeting with department chairs

Analysis of data

October

Share planning proposal with School Committee

Complete analysis of data

-Get teacher and student feedback

-Create initial proposal for implementation

November

Share initial proposal with chairs, teachers, gather feedback and refine

Gather community feedback

December

Final proposal to:

* School Committee
* Larger community

January

Revise program of study accordingly

Spring Semester and Summer

Ongoing PD with faculty

AY 2022-23

Implementation

Qualitative and quantitative data gathered from 2020-21 indicate

- Greater participation in honors level learning across the board
- Decrease of disproportionality in all demographic subgroups
- Positive reception by teachers and students
- Confidence among teachers that these practices can be repeated and expanded

Freshman data					Only S 1 enrollment	
course	**18-19**	**% honors**	**19-20**	**% honors**	**S1 20-21 (hetero)**	**% honors**
Honor ELA	181	55.4	162	48.5	115	60.5
ELA	146		172		75	
H Modern History	204	61.6	207	61.6	118	73.8
Modern History	127		129		42	
H Physical Science	185	58.9	230	62.2	110	53.9
Physical science	129		140		94	
Geometry Honors	115	59.9	76	41.5	73	71.6
Geometry	77		107		29	

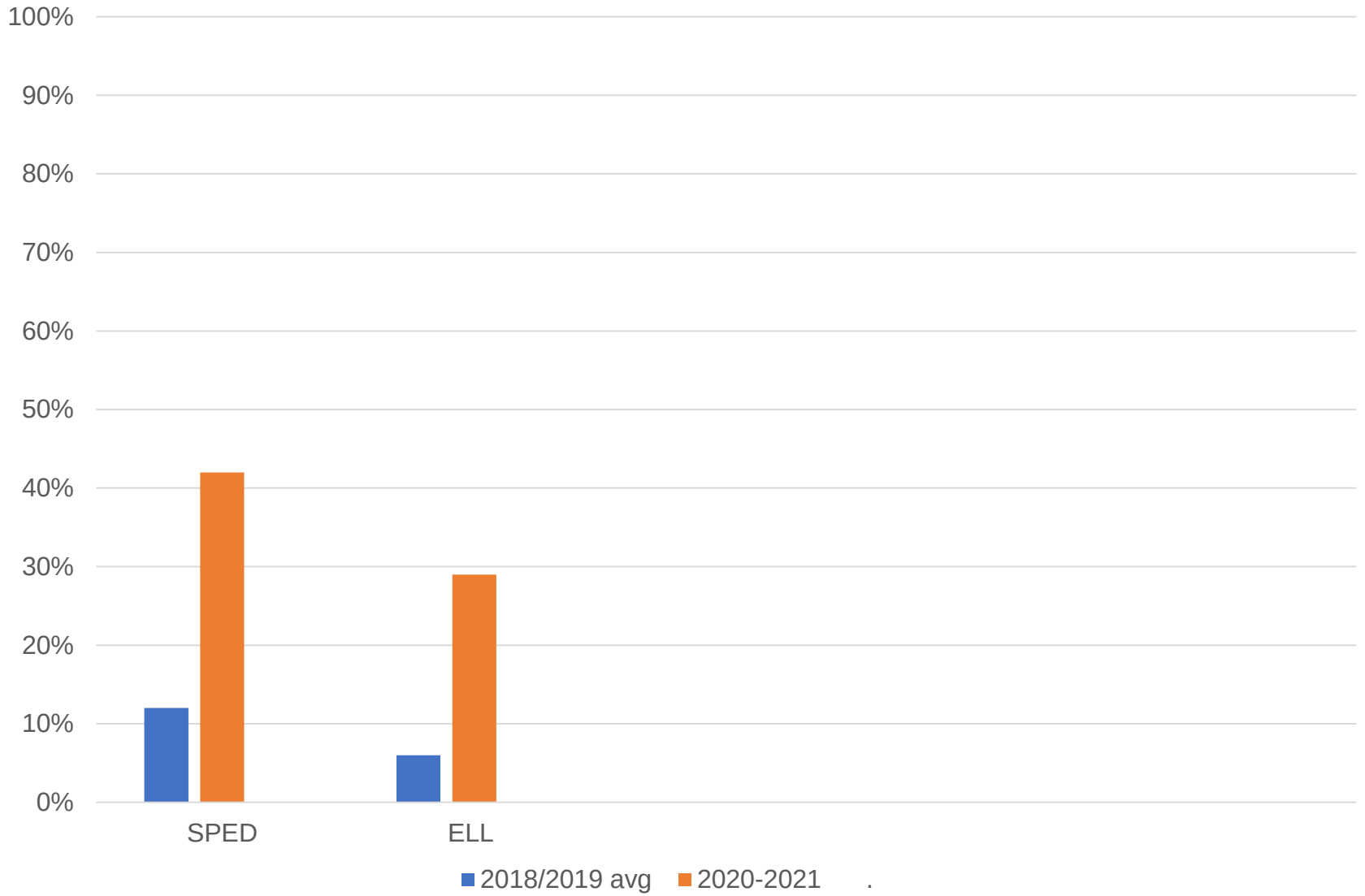
Methodology

- **Sources of Data:**
  - Powerschool records from 2017-2021
  - Quantitative and qualitative surveys conducted by AHS in Spring of 2021
- T-tests of means were used to compare the **percentage** of all students and students in different subgroups who enrolled in honors courses in SY 2020 vs. SY 2018 & 2019.
- T-tests of means were also used to compare the **average final grade percentages** of students in honors courses in SY 2020 vs. SY 2018 & 2019.
- T-tests were also performed for various demographic sub-groups
  - Regarding racial/ ethnic category (whether a student identified as Asian, Black, Hispanic, or White, students who identified as multiracial might be categorized under multiple racial/ ethnic categories
  - Regarding Special Education status (whether or not students had a special education code), students designated as substantially separate program services were excluded from examination
- **Logistic regressions with odds ratios** were used to model the likelihood of enrolling in honors ELA 10 classes.
  - The dependent variables of interest were enrollment in honors ELA 9 and final grade in ELA 9.
  - E.G: The odds of enrolling in honors ELA 10 in 2019 was **132.6 times greater** if students had taken honors ELA 9 the previous year. The odds of enrolling in honors ELA 10 in 2020 was **10.7 times greater** if students had taken honors ELA 9 the previous year.
  - Controls included:
    - Final grade in ELA 9 (The odds of enrolling in honors ELA 10 were also greater for students with a higher ELA 9 grade.)
    - Gender
    - Racial/ ethnic category (whether a student identified as Asian, Black, Hispanic, or White)
    - Special education status (whether or not students had a non-sub separate special education code)
    - English Learner Status (whether or not students had an ELD level)

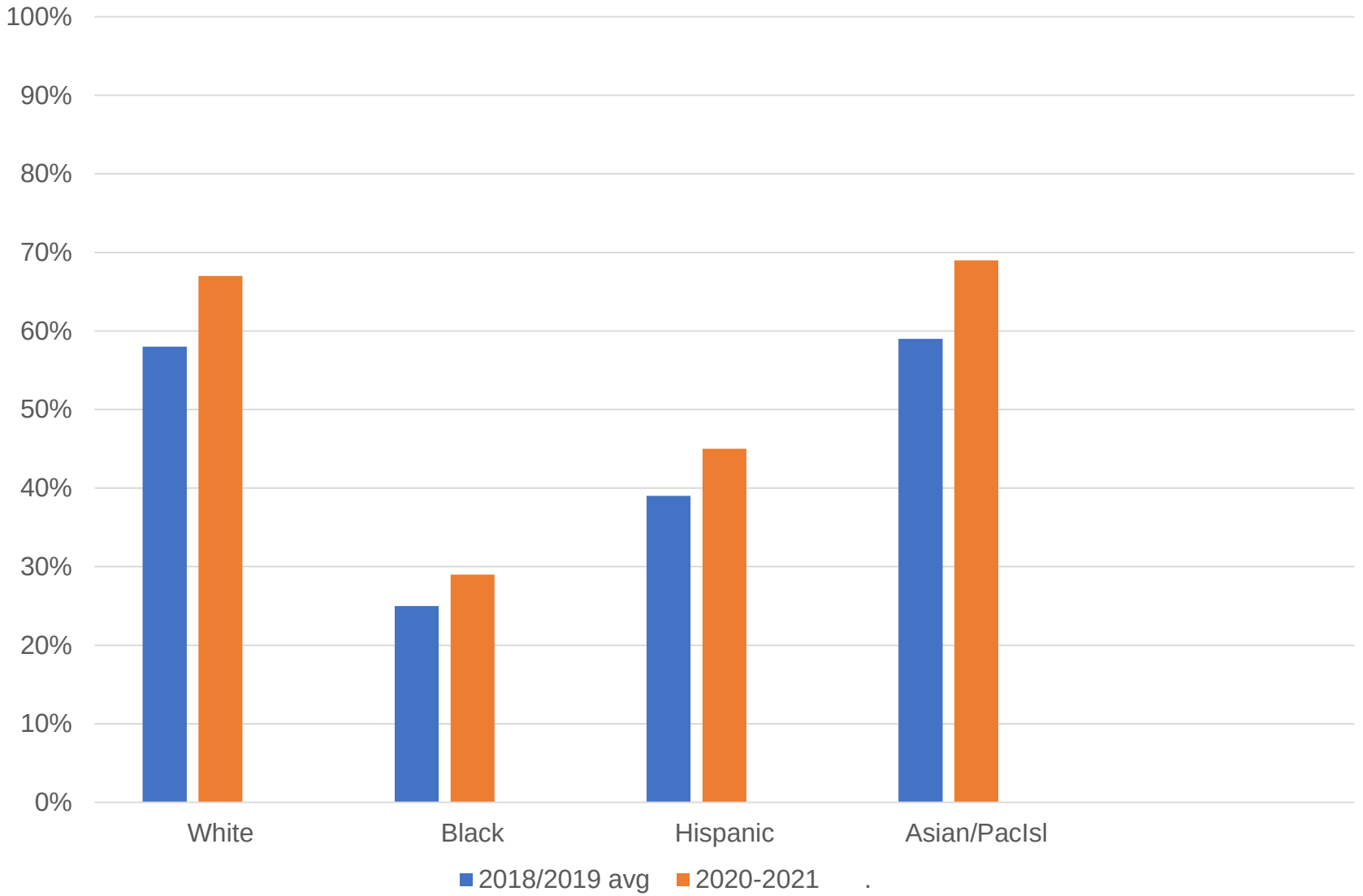
Significant Findings:

Part I: Demographics

Percentage of students enrolled in Honors in 9-10 ELA, Math and Phys. Science, plus 9-11 History by Special Education* and ELL designation:



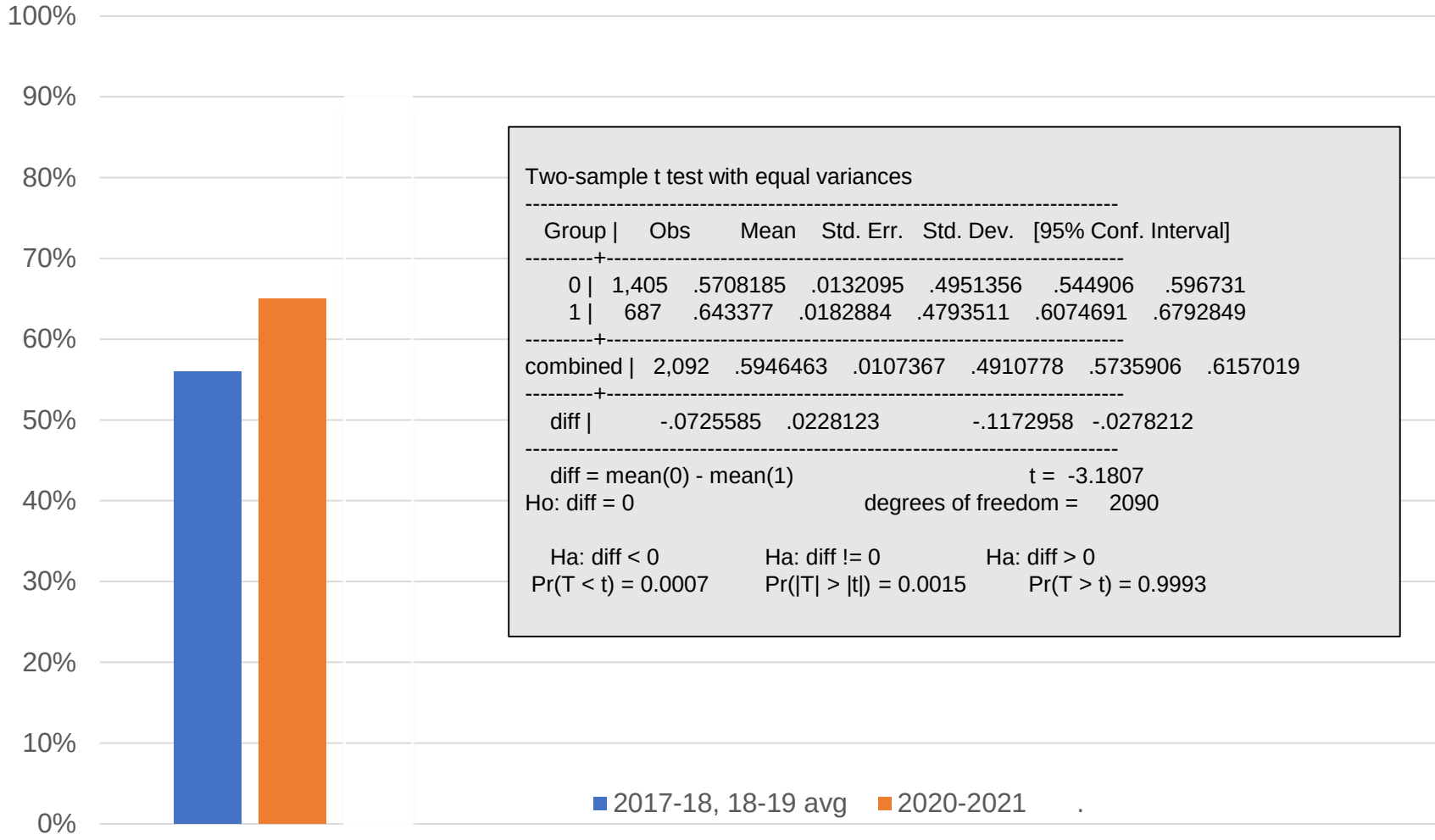
Percentage of students enrolled in Honors in 9-10 ELA, Math and Phys. Science, plus 9-11 History by race



Finding#1:

16% increase in students enrolled in honors in the 2020-21 heterogeneous vs. the two previous years.

Percentage of students enrolled in honors in 9-10 ELA, Math and Phys. Science, plus 9-11 History



Two-sample t test with equal variances

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf.	Interval]
0	1,405	.5708185	.0132095	.4951356	.544906	.596731
1	687	.643377	.0182884	.4793511	.6074691	.6792849
combined	2,092	.5946463	.0107367	.4910778	.5735906	.6157019
diff		-.0725585	.0228123		-.1172958	-.0278212

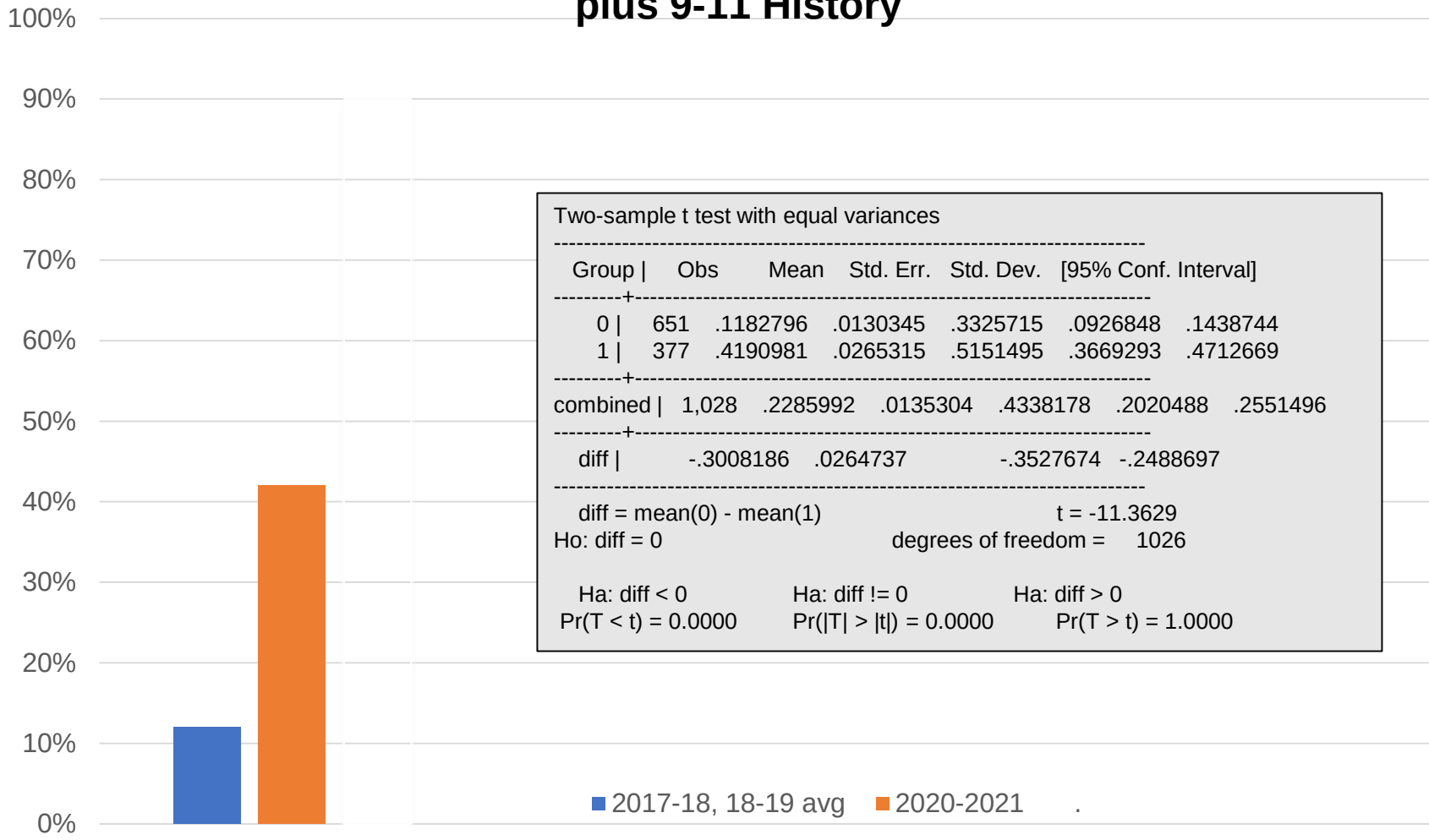
diff = mean(0) - mean(1) t = -3.1807
Ho: diff = 0 degrees of freedom = 2090

Ha: diff < 0 Ha: diff != 0 Ha: diff > 0
Pr(T < t) = 0.0007 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0015 Pr(T > t) = 0.9993

Finding#2:

250% increase in students designated with special education codes enrolled in honors in the 2020-21 heterogeneous year than in the two previous years.

Percentage of students with non-sub-separate SPED codes enrolled in honors in 9-10 ELA, Math and Phys. Science, plus 9-11 History



Two-sample t test with equal variances

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
0	651	.1182796	.0130345	.3325715	.0926848	.1438744
1	377	.4190981	.0265315	.5151495	.3669293	.4712669
combined	1,028	.2285992	.0135304	.4338178	.2020488	.2551496
diff		-.3008186	.0264737		-.3527674	-.2488697

diff = mean(0) - mean(1) t = -11.3629

Ho: diff = 0 degrees of freedom = 1026

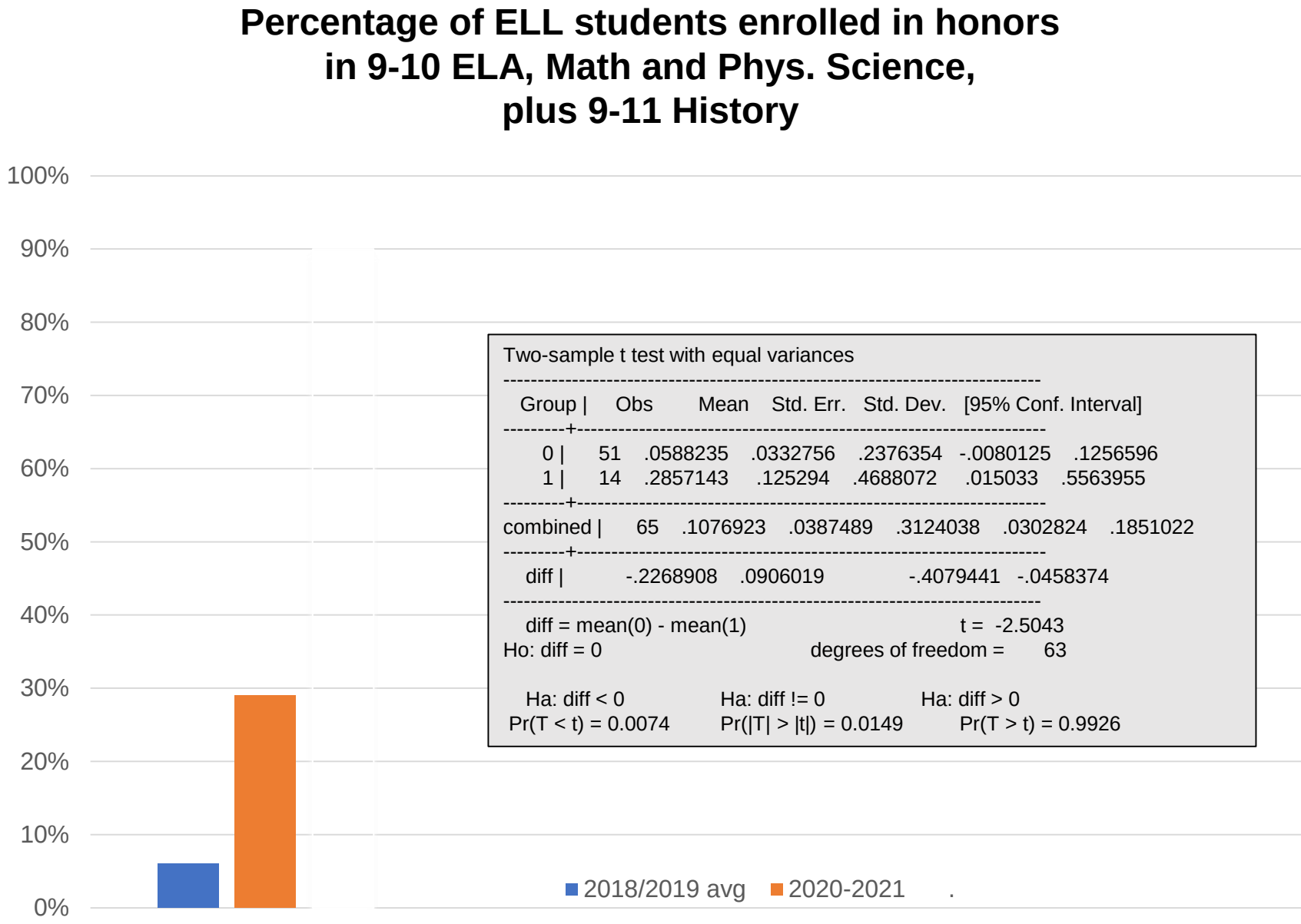
Ha: diff < 0 Pr(T < t) = 0.0000

Ha: diff != 0 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0000

Ha: diff > 0 Pr(T > t) = 1.0000

Finding#3:

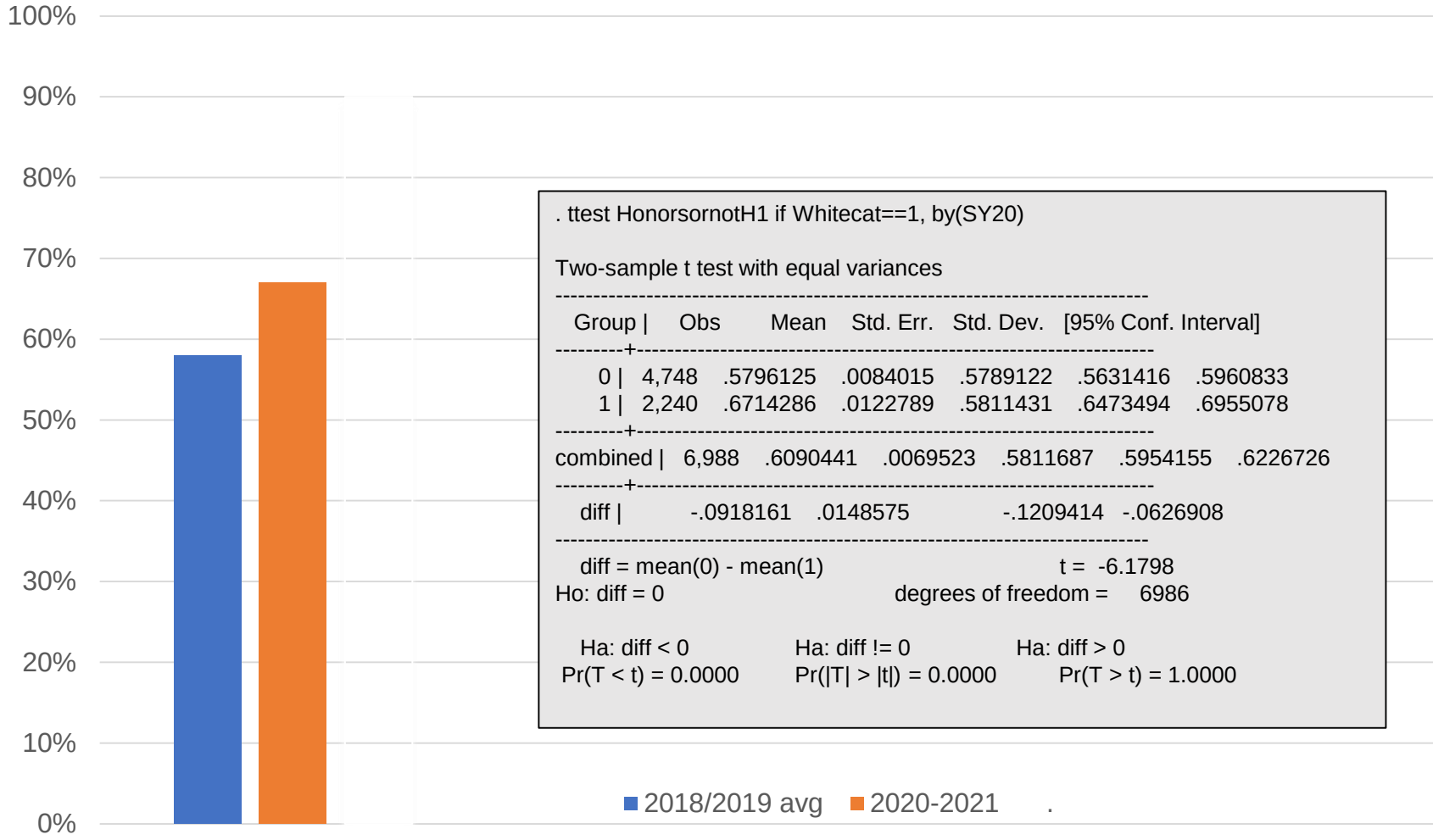
A nearly 400% increase in students designated as English Language Learners enrolled in honors in the 2020-21 heterogeneous year than in the two previous years.



Finding#4:

15% increase in White students enrolled in honors in the 2020-21 heterogeneous year than in the two previous years.

Percentage of White students enrolled in honors in 9-10 ELA, Math and Phys. Science, plus 9-11 History

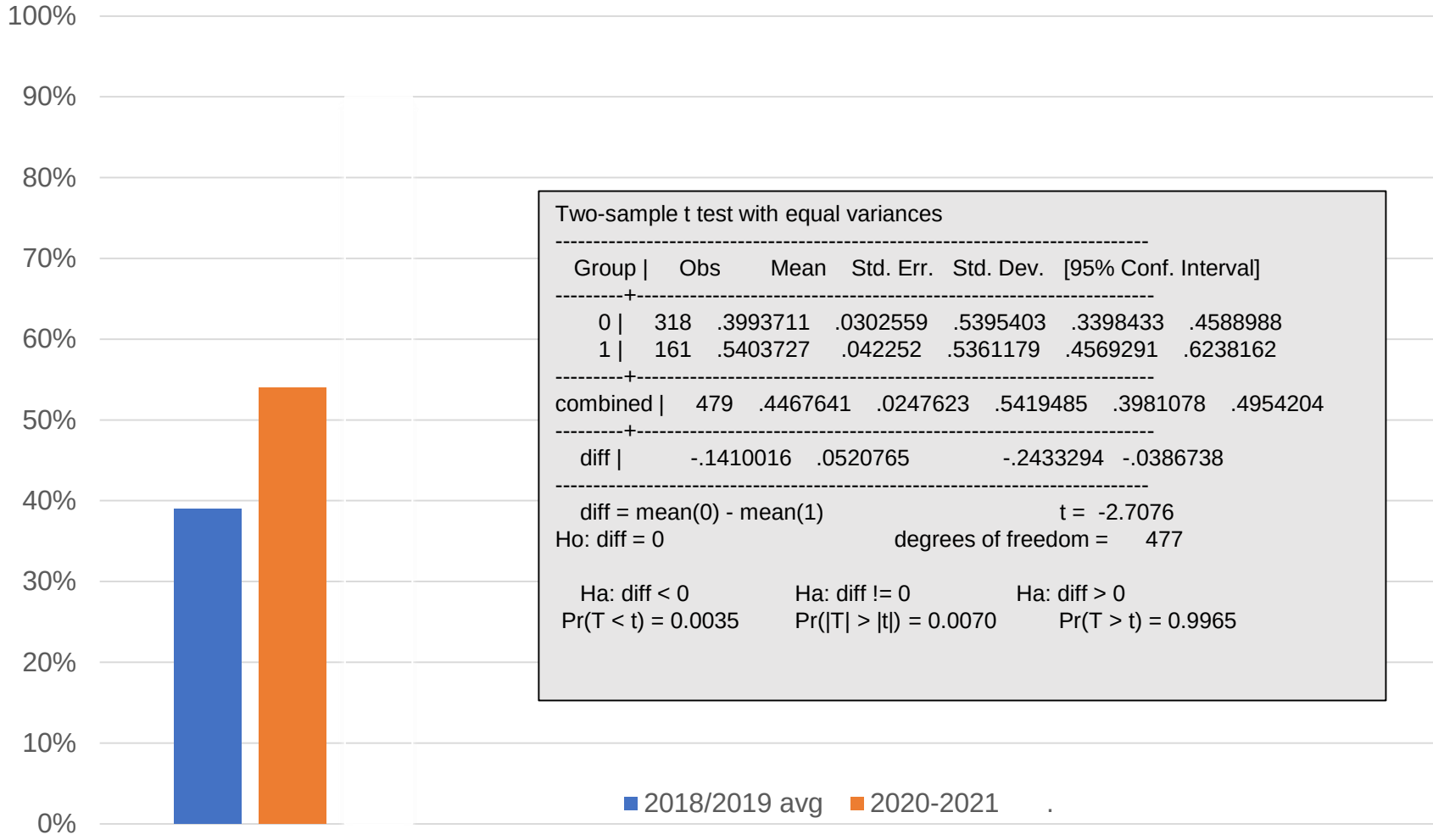



```
. ttest HonorsornotH1 if Whitecat==1, by(SY20)

Two-sample t test with equal variances
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
   Group |     Obs        Mean    Std. Err.   Std. Dev.   [95% Conf. Interval]
---------+--------------------------------------------------------------------
       0 |   4,748    .5796125    .0084015    .5789122    .5631416    .5960833
       1 |   2,240    .6714286    .0122789    .5811431    .6473494    .6955078
---------+--------------------------------------------------------------------
combined |   6,988    .6090441    .0069523    .5811687    .5954155    .6226726
---------+--------------------------------------------------------------------
    diff |         -.0918161    .0148575               -.1209414   -.0626908
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
    diff = mean(0) - mean(1)                                      t =  -6.1798
Ho: diff = 0                                     degrees of freedom =     6986

    Ha: diff < 0                 Ha: diff != 0                 Ha: diff > 0
 Pr(T < t) = 0.0000         Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0000          Pr(T > t) = 1.0000
```

Finding#5:

38% increase in Hispanic students enrolled in honors in the 2020-21 heterogeneous year than in the two previous years.

Percentage of Hispanic students enrolled in honors in 9-10 ELA, Math and Phys. Science, plus 9-11 History



Two-sample t test with equal variances

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
0	318	.3993711	.0302559	.5395403	.3398433	.4588988
1	161	.5403727	.042252	.5361179	.4569291	.6238162
combined	479	.4467641	.0247623	.5419485	.3981078	.4954204
diff		-.1410016	.0520765		-.2433294	-.0386738

diff = mean(0) - mean(1) t = -2.7076

Ho: diff = 0 degrees of freedom = 477

Ha: diff < 0 Pr(T < t) = 0.0035

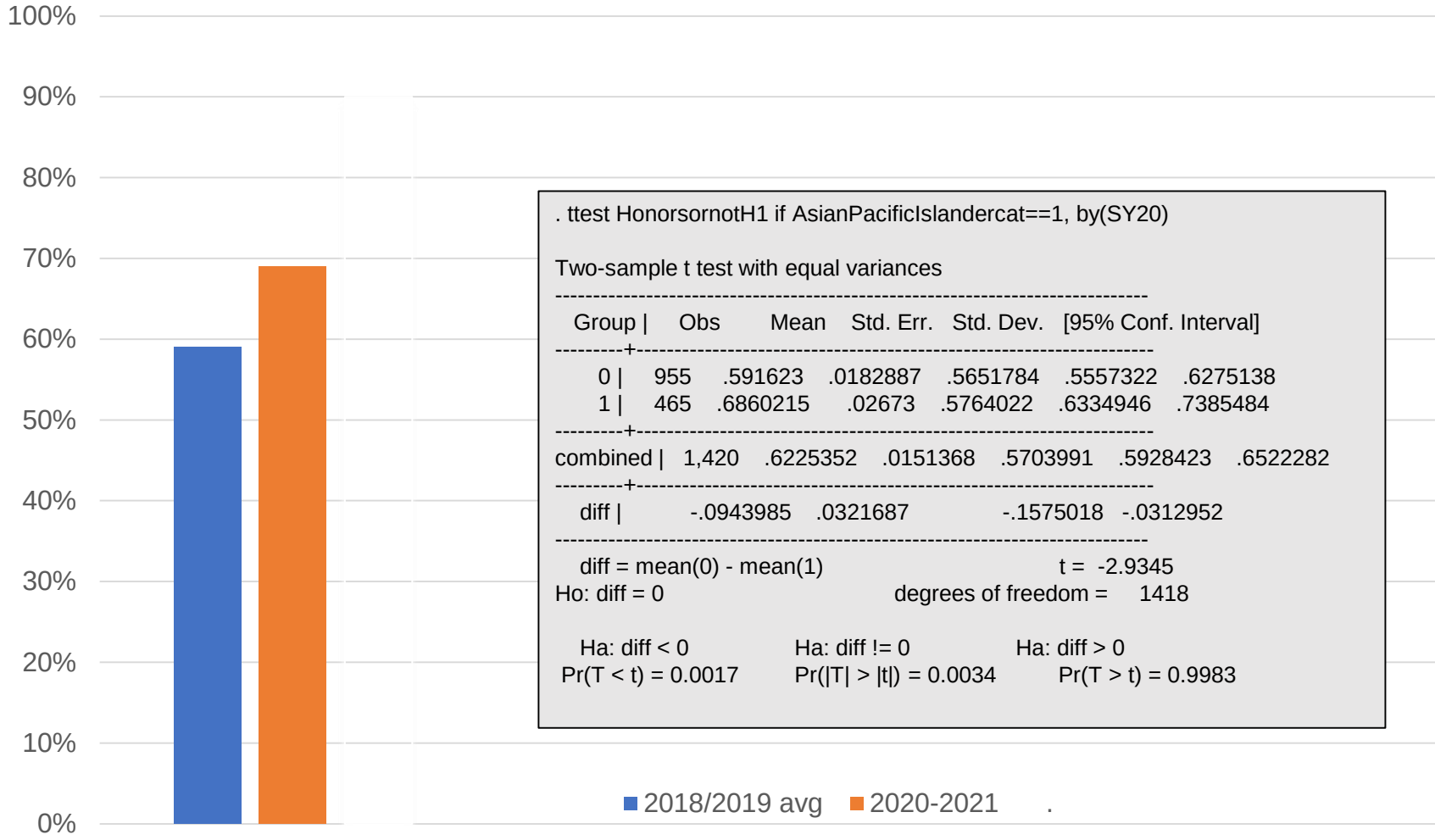
Ha: diff != 0 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0070

Ha: diff > 0 Pr(T > t) = 0.9965

Finding#6:

17% increase in Asian/Pacific Islander students enrolled in honors in the 2020-21 heterogeneous year than in the two previous years.

Percentage of AAPI students enrolled in honors in 9-10 ELA, Math and Phys. Science, plus 9-11 History

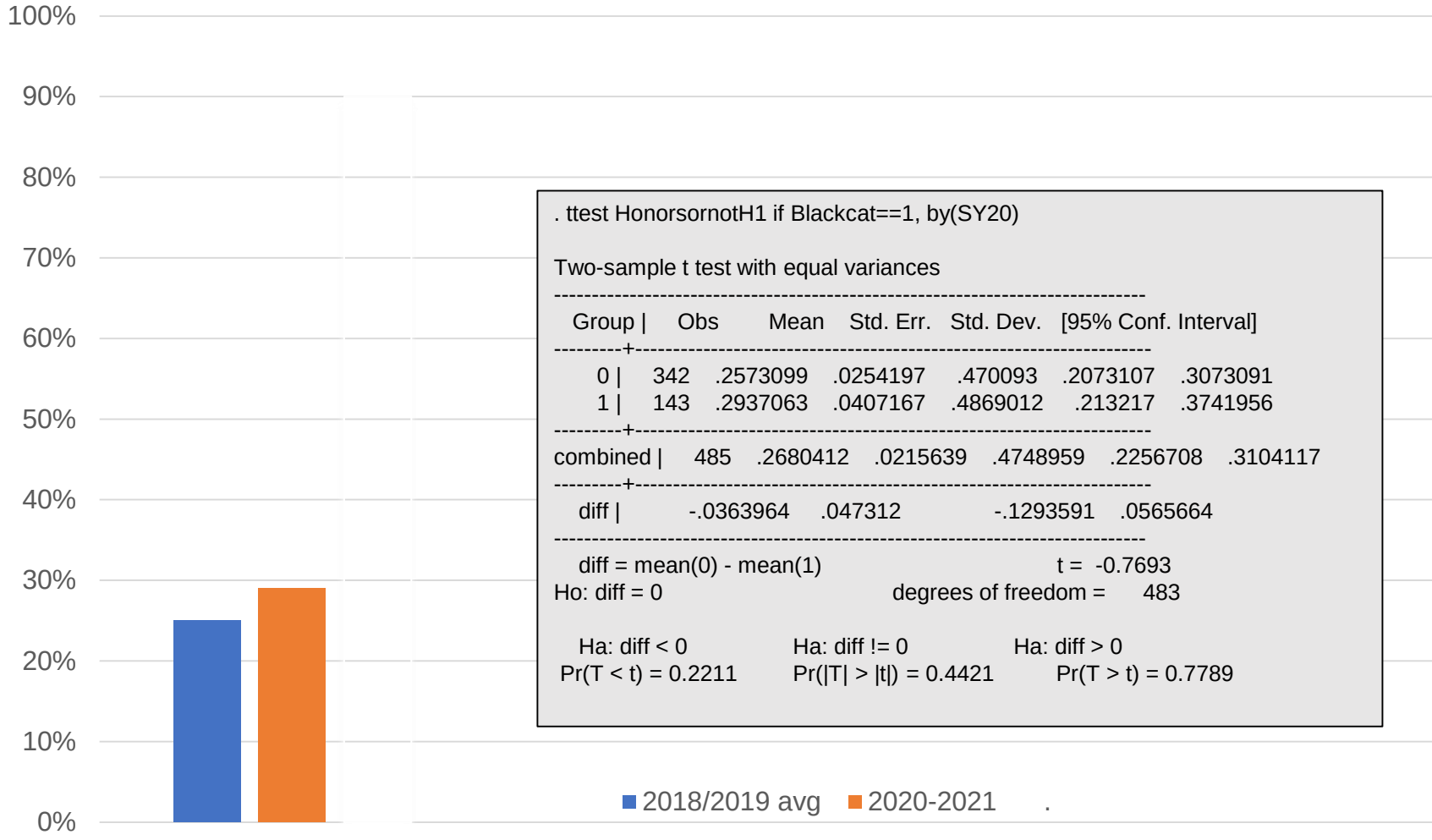



```
. ttest HonorsornotH1 if AsianPacificIslandercat==1, by(SY20)

Two-sample t test with equal variances
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
   Group |     Obs        Mean    Std. Err.   Std. Dev.   [95% Conf. Interval]
---------+--------------------------------------------------------------------
       0 |     955    .591623    .0182887    .5651784    .5557322    .6275138
       1 |     465   .6860215     .02673    .5764022    .6334946    .7385484
---------+--------------------------------------------------------------------
combined |   1,420   .6225352   .0151368   .5703991   .5928423   .6522282
---------+--------------------------------------------------------------------
    diff |        -.0943985   .0321687               -.1575018   -.0312952
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
    diff = mean(0) - mean(1)                                      t =  -2.9345
Ho: diff = 0                     degrees of freedom =     1418

    Ha: diff < 0                 Ha: diff != 0                 Ha: diff > 0
 Pr(T < t) = 0.0017         Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0034          Pr(T > t) = 0.9983
```

16% increase in Black students enrolled in honors in the 2020-21 heterogeneous year than in the two previous years.

While this difference was not statistically significant due to small population size, it is a step in the right direction.

Percentage of Black students enrolled in honors in 9-10 ELA, Math and Phys. Science, plus 9-11 History



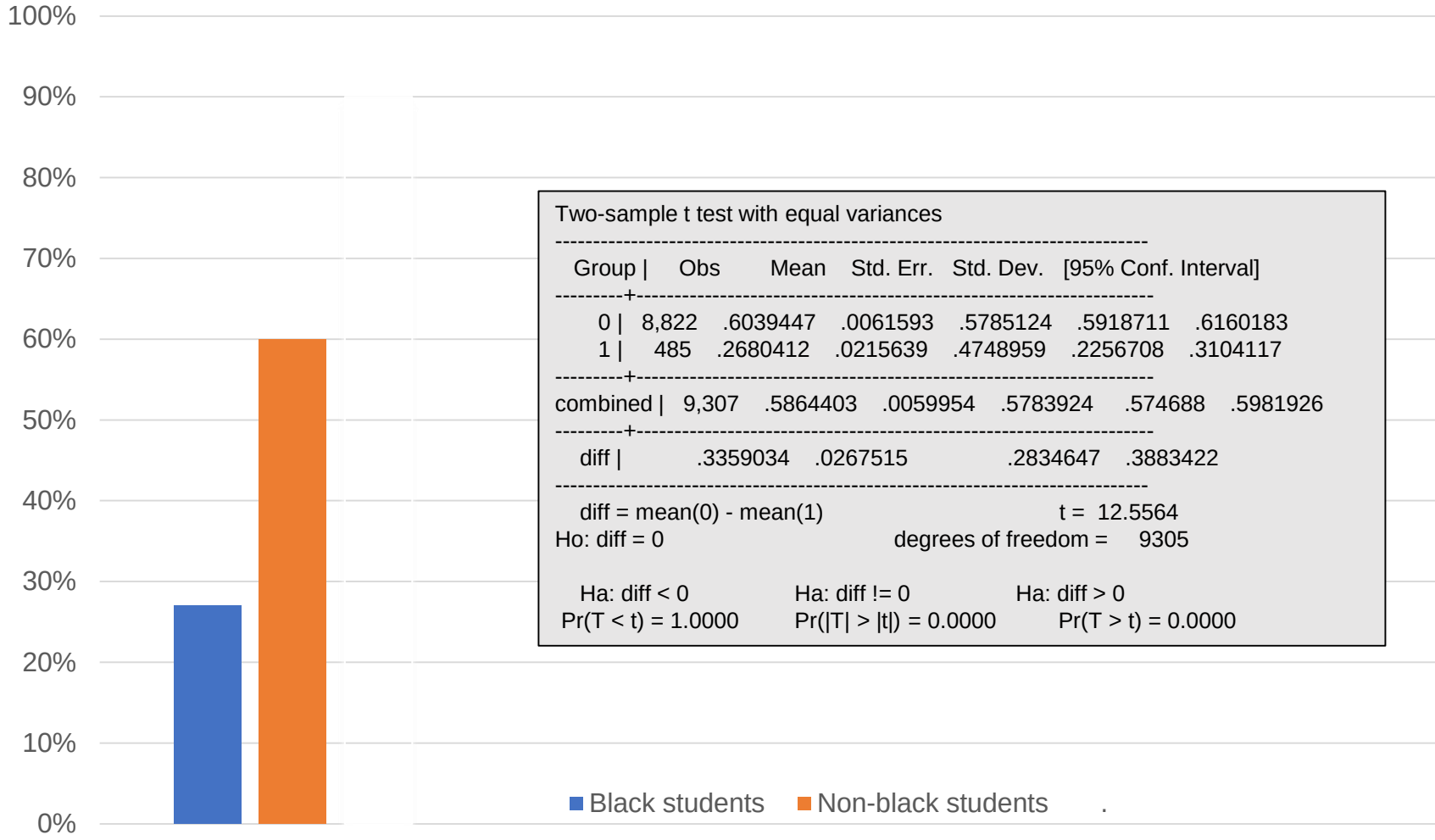

```
. ttest HonorsornotH1 if Blackcat==1, by(SY20)

Two-sample t test with equal variances
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
   Group |     Obs        Mean    Std. Err.   Std. Dev.   [95% Conf. Interval]
---------+--------------------------------------------------------------------
       0 |     342    .2573099    .0254197    .470093    .2073107    .3073091
       1 |     143    .2937063    .0407167   .4869012     .213217    .3741956
---------+--------------------------------------------------------------------
combined |     485    .2680412    .0215639   .4748959    .2256708    .3104117
---------+--------------------------------------------------------------------
    diff |         -.0363964     .047312               -.1293591    .0565664
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
    diff = mean(0) - mean(1)                                      t =  -0.7693
Ho: diff = 0                                     degrees of freedom =      483

    Ha: diff < 0                 Ha: diff != 0                 Ha: diff > 0
 Pr(T < t) = 0.2211         Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.4421          Pr(T > t) = 0.7789
```

Finding #7:

In all three years, Black students enrolled at slightly less than half the average rate of all non-Black students.

More work needs to be done to support their learning.

Percentage of students enrolled in honors in 9-10 ELA, Math and Phys. Science, plus 9-11 History 2017-2021



Two-sample t test with equal variances

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf.	Interval]
0	8,822	.6039447	.0061593	.5785124	.5918711	.6160183
1	485	.2680412	.0215639	.4748959	.2256708	.3104117
combined	9,307	.5864403	.0059954	.5783924	.574688	.5981926
diff		.3359034	.0267515		.2834647	.3883422

diff = mean(0) - mean(1) t = 12.5564
Ho: diff = 0 degrees of freedom = 9305

Ha: diff < 0 Ha: diff != 0 Ha: diff > 0
Pr(T < t) = 1.0000 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0000 Pr(T > t) = 0.0000

Significant Findings:

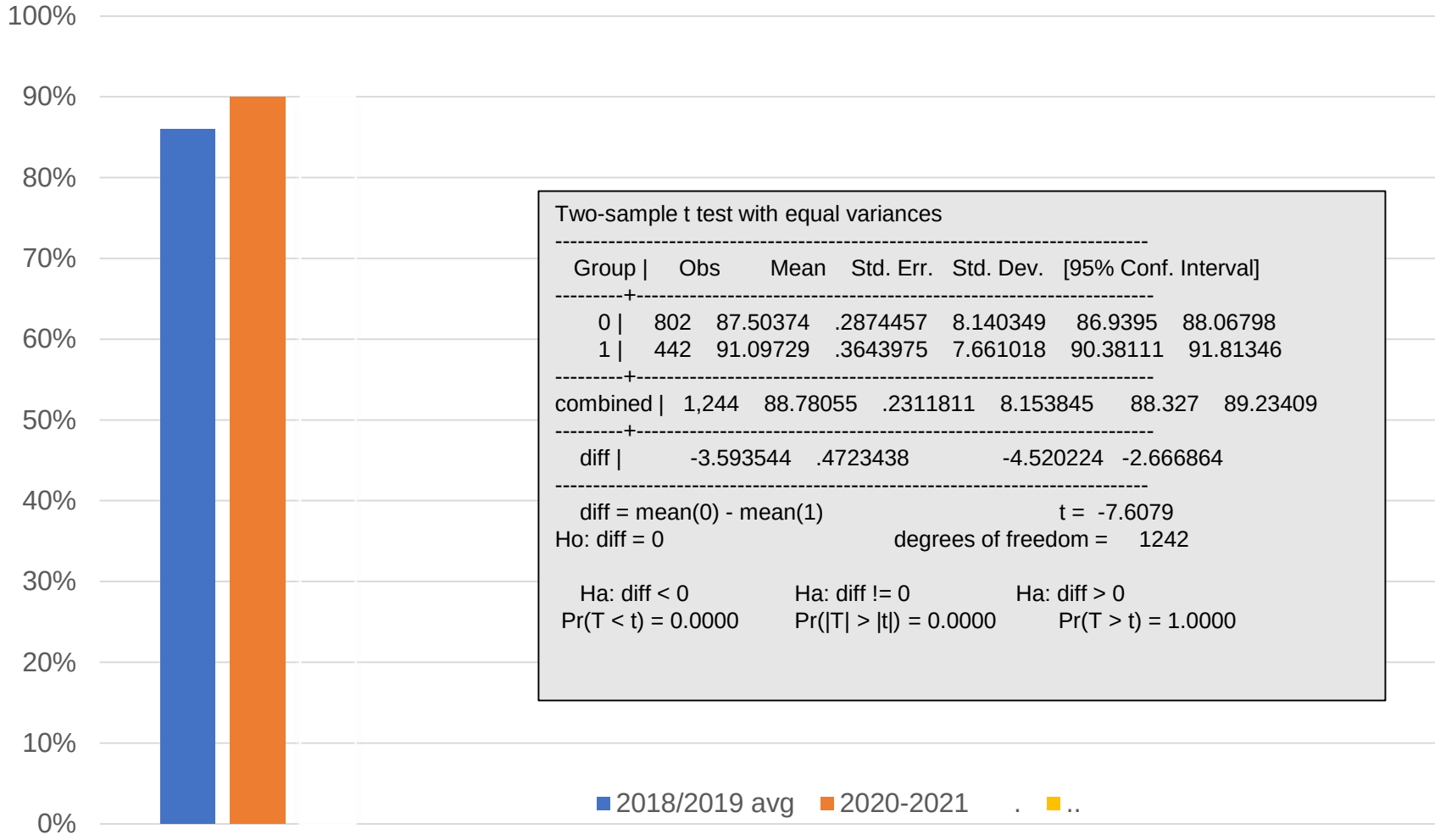
Part II: Academic performance

Finding#9:

For students who enrolled in Honors, the average grade was **4 percentage points higher** in SY20 than in previous years.

This is even though classes were heterogeneously grouped *and* more students enrolled than otherwise would have.

Average GPA among those taking Honors in 9-10 ELA, Math and Phys. Science, plus 9-11 History



Two-sample t test with equal variances

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf.	Interval]
0	802	87.50374	.2874457	8.140349	86.9395	88.06798
1	442	91.09729	.3643975	7.661018	90.38111	91.81346
combined	1,244	88.78055	.2311811	8.153845	88.327	89.23409
diff		-3.593544	.4723438		-4.520224	-2.666864

diff = mean(0) - mean(1) t = -7.6079

Ho: diff = 0 degrees of freedom = 1242

Ha: diff < 0 Pr(T < t) = 0.0000

Ha: diff != 0 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0000

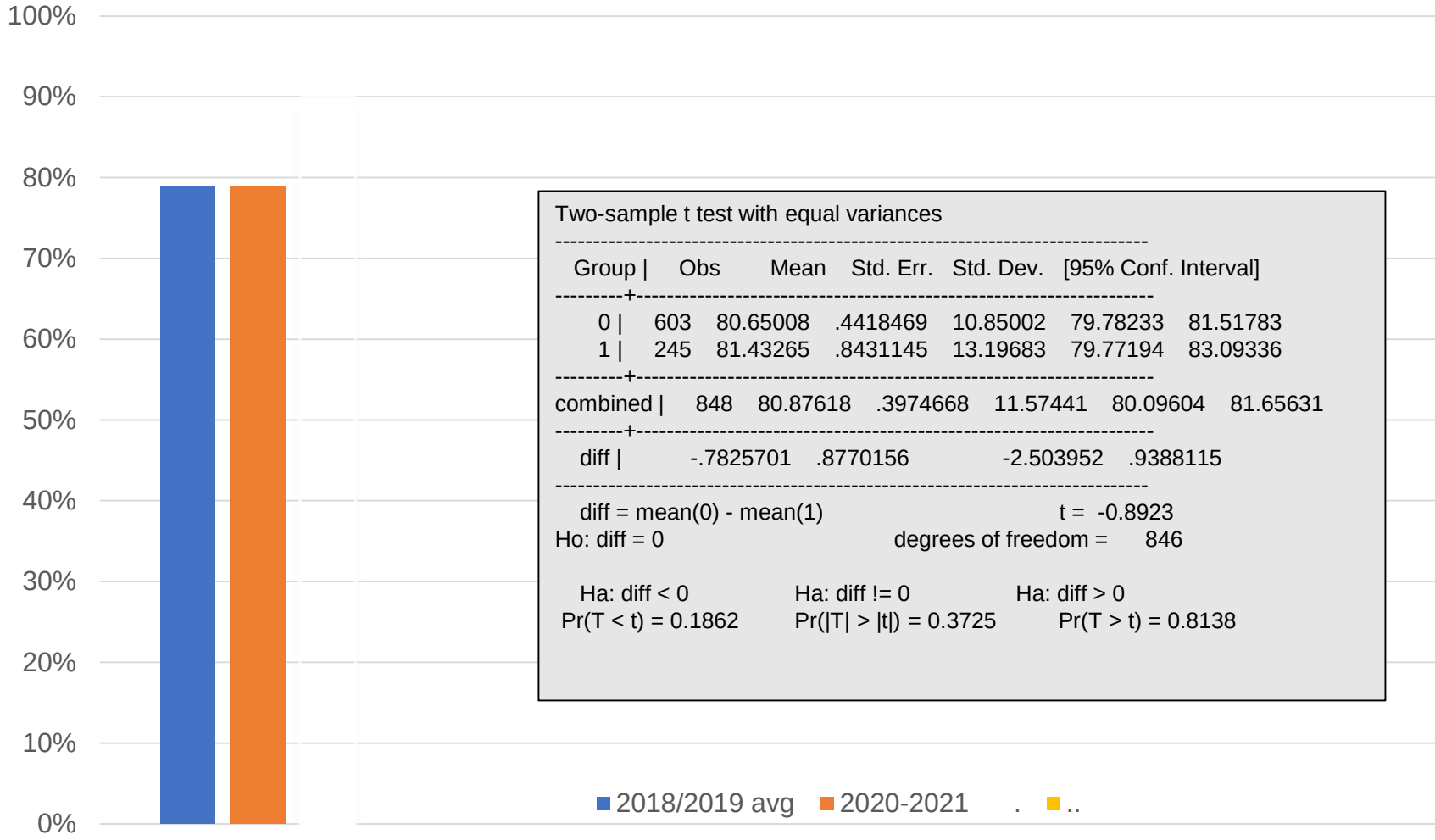
Ha: diff > 0 Pr(T > t) = 1.0000

Finding#10:

For students enrolled in Curriculum A, there was no relative change in GPA during 2020-2021.

(The 10% who switched to honors were among the higher performers, so the fact that grades remained constant indicates that the remaining students earned better grades)

Average GPA among those taking Curriculum A in 9-10 ELA, Math and Phys. Science, plus 9-11 History



Two-sample t test with equal variances

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf.	Interval]
0	603	80.65008	.4418469	10.85002	79.78233	81.51783
1	245	81.43265	.8431145	13.19683	79.77194	83.09336
combined	848	80.87618	.3974668	11.57441	80.09604	81.65631
diff		-.7825701	.8770156		-2.503952	.9388115

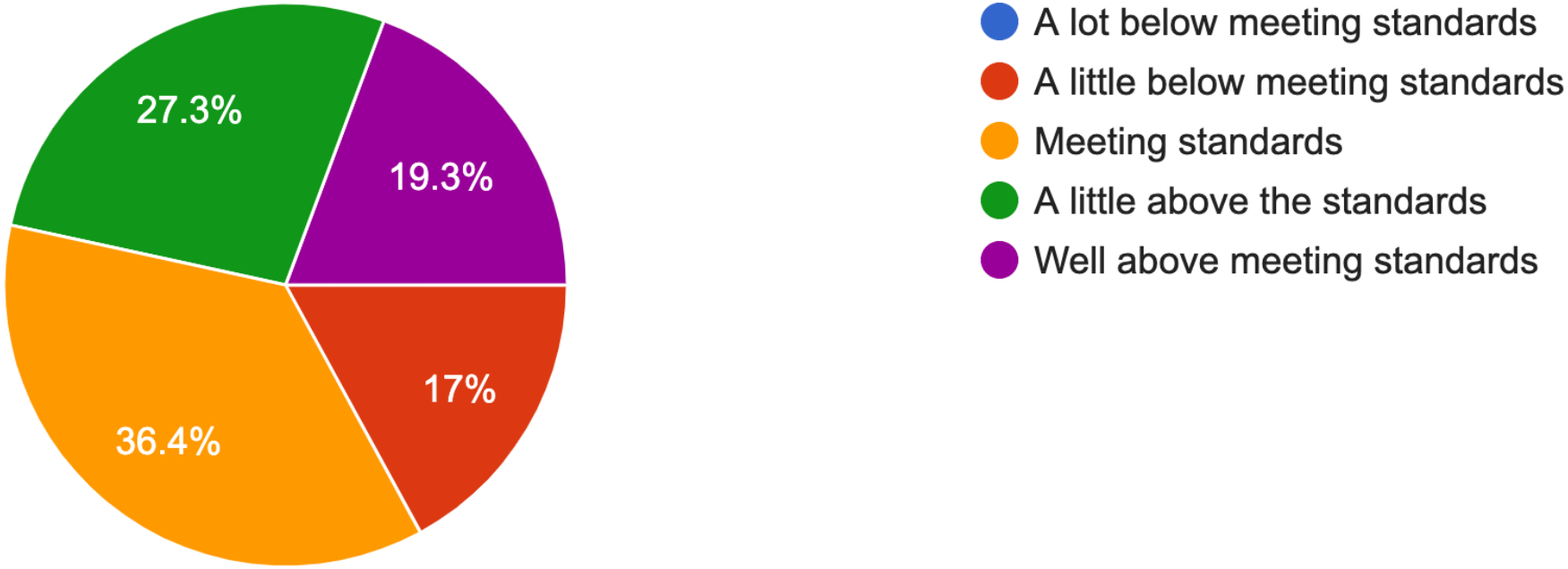
diff = mean(0) - mean(1) t = -0.8923
Ho: diff = 0 degrees of freedom = 846

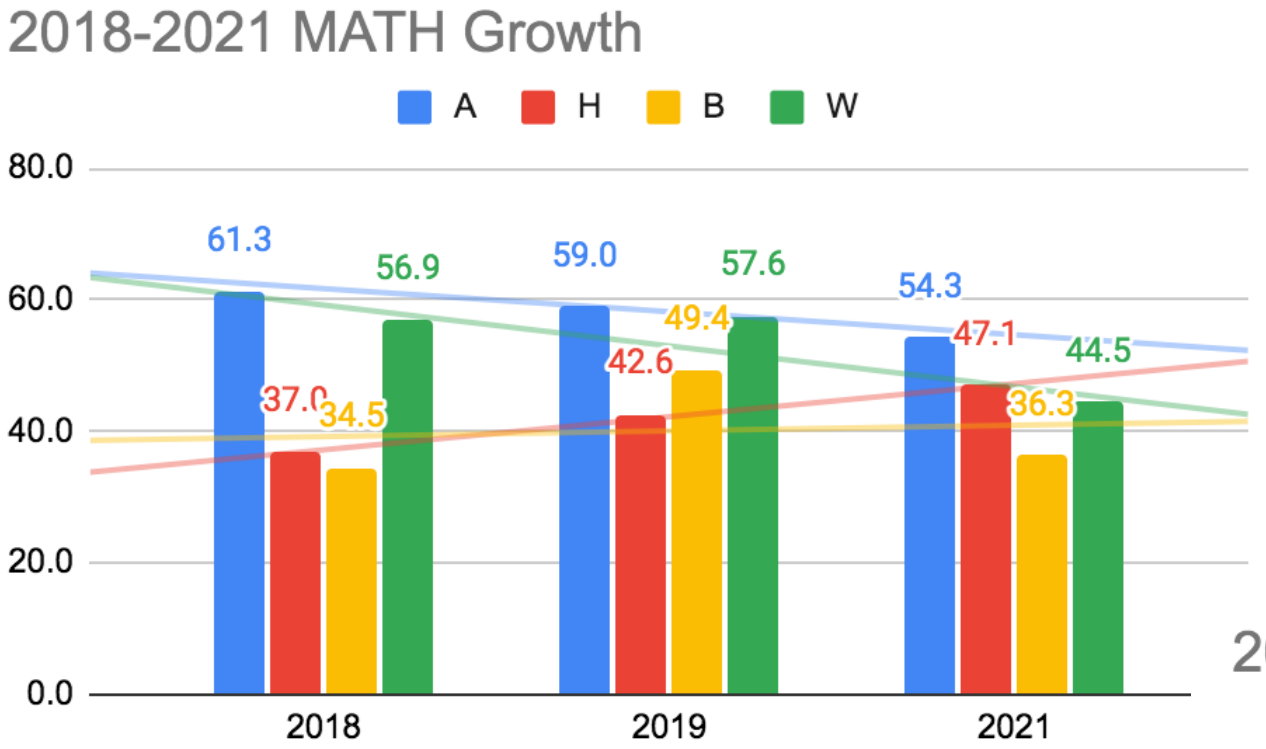
Ha: diff < 0 Ha: diff != 0 Ha: diff > 0
Pr(T < t) = 0.1862 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.3725 Pr(T > t) = 0.8138

Teacher surveys indicated that increased grades and participation in honors did **not** indicate lack of rigor.

Do you feel that your students are making adequate academic progress to meet standards?

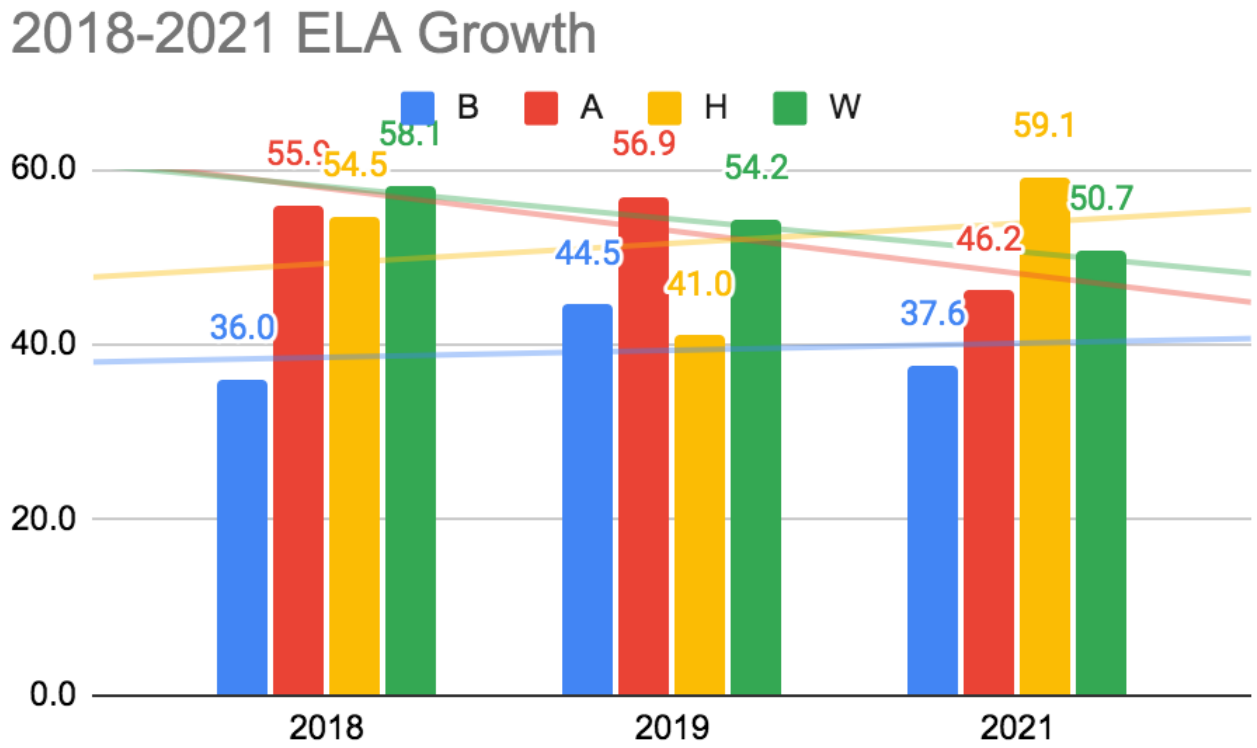
88 responses



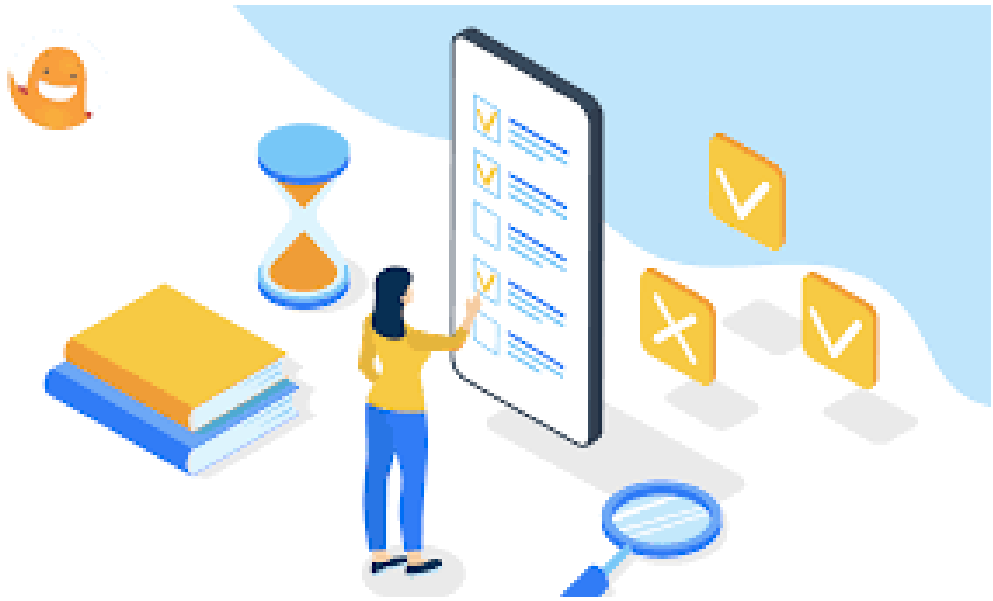


MCAS results did not reflect substantial drops.

Note the upward trend in Hispanic student scores, in defiance of statewide trends.

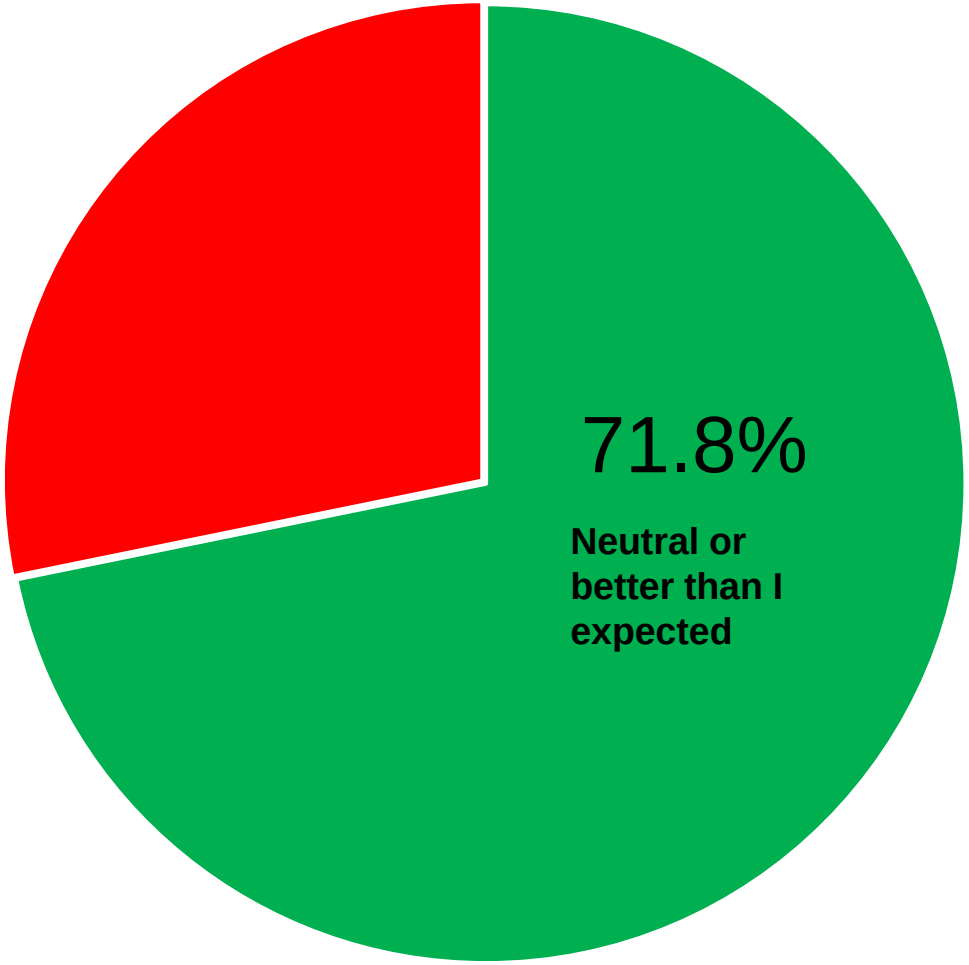


Part III: Qualitative and Quantitative survey data

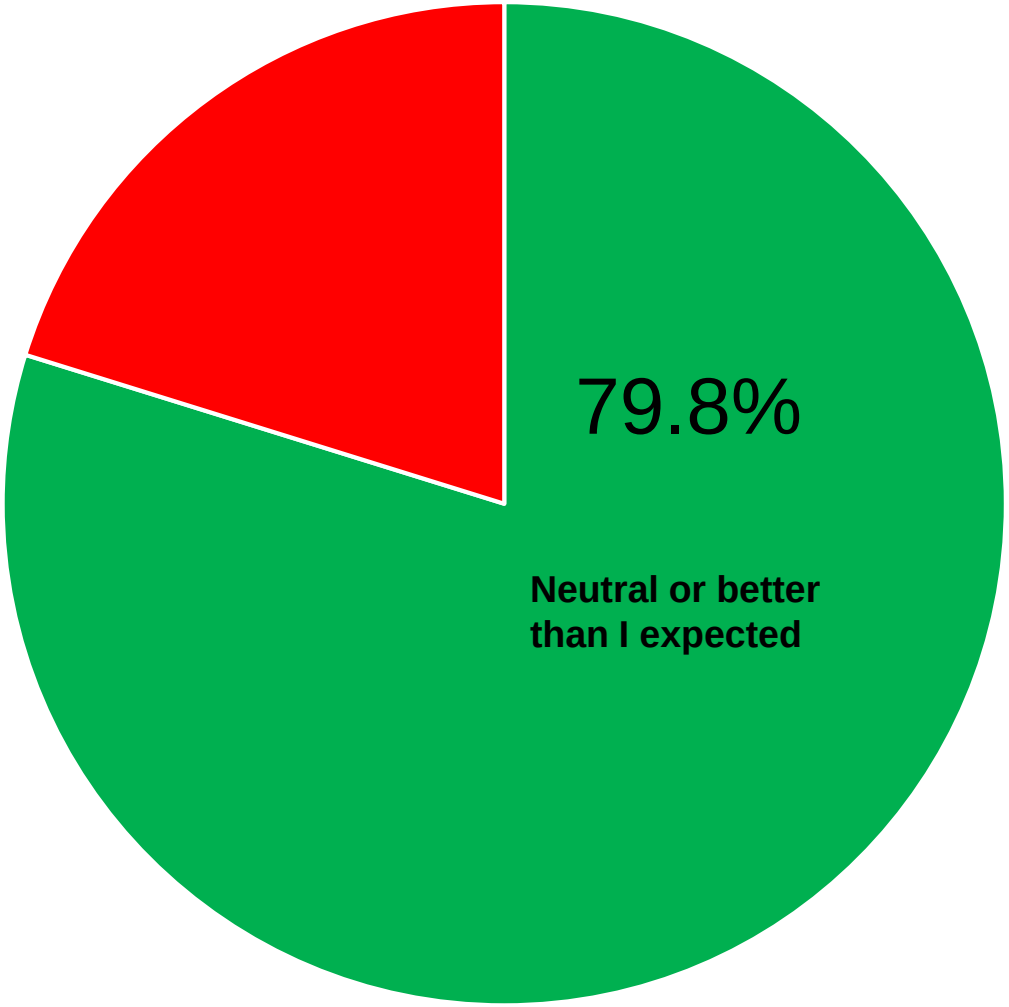


Response to survey question: What has been your overall experience with heterogeneous classes this year?

Students (n=198)



Parents (n=337)



Sample student survey feedback:

- “It was nice to be given the option to take Curriculum A or Honors, it gave us a sense of control in this complicated situation.”
- “Students feel less self conscious about their course level. All students learning together makes group work easier and reduces alienation of certain students based on academic level.”
- “A plus for heterogeneous classes was that schedules could be made more easily, with students not confined to having classes with others in similar levels.”
- “They can allow for less classes in total and can allow more choices for students when wanting to go up or down a level.”
- It removed the stigma behind taking a Curriculum A class.”
- “More opportunity to meet new people and make friends, diverse classes.”
- “I love that we can choose honors/a level a few weeks into the class so we can have a better understanding of what the differences are and what it entails.”

Sample parent/family survey feedback:

- "Inclusive for all students. Kids can be grouped with students of all levels of abilities."
- "[My child] was able to take more challenging assignments, even though enrolled in curriculum A."
- "Kids feel less tracked and stigmatized."
- "It was good that a student could see for herself what the class was like and then choose honors."
- "More equity, less labeling."
- "It would challenge that student that might not be in honors, and it would bring a different perspective for a student that would have been always with other honors students."
- "Like anything else in life, the more we can include different levels in any specific group, the better we all do. Why not encourage and facilitate this type of learning? It's a win-win."
- "My daughter who would never willingly take an honors class, because she just not that confident academically, decided to opt into Honors English this year. This was after meeting the teacher, learning about the class and getting a feel for it, She was much more comfortable with the course, so she opted to take the Honors level. And she's been successful."

Sample teacher survey feedback:

- “Having experimented with heterogeneous classes this year, it seems clear to me that all students benefit both academically and socially from this arrangement.”
- A couple of interesting data points from last semester... I convinced a student to take honors who was going to take Curr A. Another student, who I would have suggested take Curr A, decided to take Honors. A third student of mine, who I tried unsuccessfully to talk into Honors, ended up doing many of the Honors assignments for extra credit. All these kids were successful.”
- “The negatives [of heterogeneous courses] seem comparatively inconsequential in regards to the positives and are likely more embedded in systems of elitism, racism, and ableism….Any idea of the "dulling down" of the "brightest" is often an excuse for continued discrimination…when we raise up the marginalized, everyone is raised up along with them in every circumstance.”

Takeaways from families and students who reported lack of satisfaction:

Need for effective differentiation:

"Heterogeneous classes are meant to be inclusive but in reality cater to the lowest common denominator."

"It is not fair to anyone because no one gets the individual attention they requested when selecting their courses"

"Too slow for the honors kids, too fast for for the Curric A. kids"

Honors learning needs to be about more than just having extra work:

"[Honors] is just a few extra projects here and there"

"…they were hammered with more homework"

"Teachers are simply assigning additional work they have not elevated instruction for honors classes."

Social/behavioral norms need to be addressed:

"…being in group work with students who didn't give a damn"

Most illustrative parent quotation:

"The success will ultimately depend on how able the teachers are to balance the very different needs of different learners."

"The success will ultimately depend on how able the teachers are to balance the very different needs of different learners."

The road ahead:

- Continue analysis of data as applied to different subject areas
- Ensure that all AHS faculty have the skill set to effectively teach heterogenous classes with embedded honors. Specifically:
  - To not just "teach to the middle," but work with all students to help them develop tailored paths for deep learning
  - To not define honors just as "more work," but *more complex/more sophisticated* learning activities.

Timeline

September

Initial meeting with department chairs

Analysis of data

October

Share planning proposal with School Committee

Complete analysis of data

-Get teacher and student feedback

-Create initial proposal for implementation

November

Share initial proposal with chairs, teachers, gather feedback and refine

Gather community feedback

December

Final proposal to:

* School Committee
* Larger community

January

Revise program of study accordingly

Spring Semester and Summer

Ongoing PD with faculty

AY 2022-23

Implementation

Upcoming parent/community forums

Long-term goals

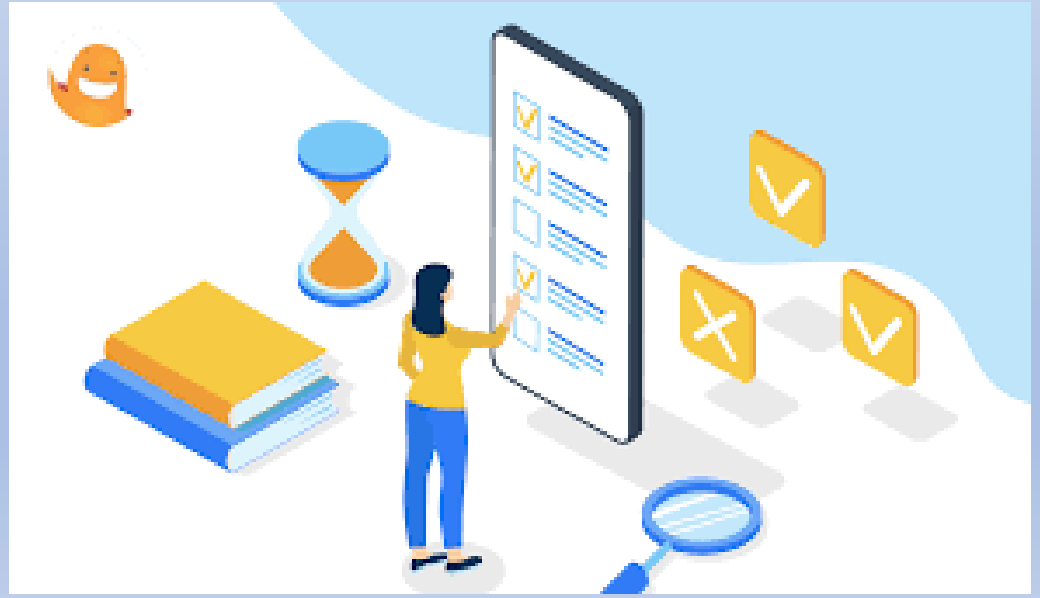
In order to

- Promote equity
- Increase the number of students) engaged in challenging, higher-cognitive-load (“honors level”) learning
- Increase the opportunities and motivation for high performing students to actually *do* challenging, higher-cognitive-load (“honors level”) learning, rather than “rest on the laurels” of an honors designation.

→ AHS will adopt heterogeneous instruction in all freshman and sophomore ELA, history and freshman science classes as a pilot.

→ Based on our experience with this pilot we will continue to develop better pathways and practices for achieving the above goals.

Appendix



Four necessary questions for each department to take up:

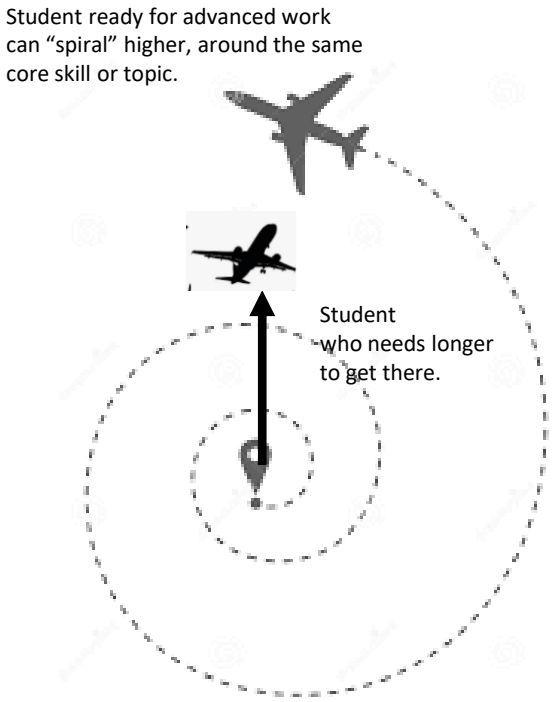
Four necessary questions for each department to take up:

1. What are the core skill and content knowledge goals that you have for students?

Each department will agree upon the **most important, core things students must know and be able to do at each grade level**.

Differentiated classrooms focus on deep learning rather than content coverage.

These topics should be *iterative* – in other words, there should be a way to explore them in varying degrees of depth, allowing some students the chance to explore them at advanced levels at the same time that other students are taking a longer time to Get the basics.



Four necessary questions for each department to take up:

1. What are the core skill and content knowledge goals that you have for students?

Develop **rubrics** to make what constitutes honors vs. standard level work transparent to students, parents, etc.

Remember that the distinction should be about *complexity* of work and *depth of thinking*, not just *quantity* or *speed* of work.

Four necessary questions for each department to take up:

2. What will be your mechanism for honors participation?

- Will students contract as “signing up for honors” for a whole year? Semester? Quarter?
  - If so, will there be options for switching in or out midway?

- Will honors be an option from unit to unit or assignment to assignment?
  - If so, how many taken at the honors level will equal honors credit? (for the quarter? Semester? Whole year?)
  - Are revisions allowed? Can I go back and revise work that met the standard level to meet the honors level?

Four necessary questions for each department to take up:

2. What will be your mechanism for honors participation?

- What steps will teachers take to encourage all students to engage in more challenging learning?

How will we ensure that students in heterogeneous classes have the opportunity to change their level of learning over time? (i.e., We don't want to just move tracking to live *within* a class instead of *between* classes?)

- What scaffolds and supports will they put in place to help all students do so?

Four necessary questions for each department to take up:

2. What will be your mechanism for honors participation?

One way to avoid the “just re-creating tracking within a single classroom” trap is through **constant, low-stakes formative assessment.**

It doesn’t have to be a lengthy assessment, and it shouldn’t necessarily ”count” for “points,” but you need to have a week by week sense of where everyone is, so you can keep adjusting the challenge level for different students if need be.

Four necessary questions for each department to take up:

2. What will be your mechanism for honors participation?

Teachers should consider allowing as much penalty-free revision as possible.

Remember, the goal is to *move all students towards* higher level learning, not just make note of where everyone is and rank them where they are.

A class where everyone earns an A is, from a *learning* perspective, a class where students have all met the standard.

Four necessary questions for each department to take up:

3. What will change about the way you structure your class?

Effective differentiated instruction often does *not* look like all students doing the same, teacher-directed activity, at the same time.

Four necessary questions for each department to take up:

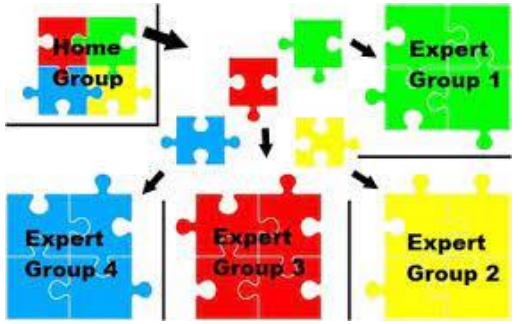
3. What will change about the way you structure your class?

Full class activity to introduce a core concept.

Students pursue different assignments in groups, based on readiness level, interest, learning preference, etc.

The groups can be made of students who are all at the same level.

The groups can also be mixed up, so students at higher levels can help teach their peers.



Four necessary questions for each department to take up:

3. What will change about the way you structure your class?

Full class activity to introduce a core concept.

Students pursue different assignments in groups, based on readiness level, interest, learning preference, etc.

The class can also then come back together to talk about the core concept again, now informed by their new understandings.

Four necessary questions for each department to take up:

4. How will you create value for *all* students?

Think about ways in which students who present with lower skills can have what they bring be a vital part of the classroom, even something the “high performers” can learn from.

For example:

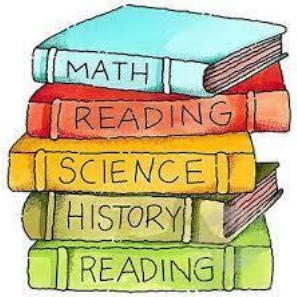
Four necessary questions for each department to take up:

4. How will you create value for *all* students?

Think about ways in which students who present with lower skills can have what they bring be a vital part of the classroom, even something the “high performers” can learn from.

For example:

1. Create interdisciplinary projects and connections, so that students with strengths in *other* subject areas, even if not in yours, can teach/support their classmates.



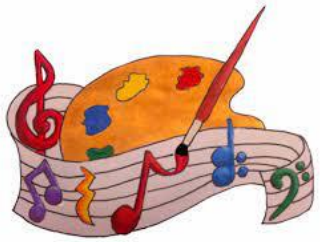
Four necessary questions for each department to take up:

4. How will you create value for *all* students?

Think about ways in which students who present with lower skills can have what they bring be a vital part of the classroom, even something the “high performers” can learn from.

For example:

2. Create group projects that incorporate art, music, sculpture, etc., giving those students with strong skills in those areas an important role to contribute in addition to content-area knowledge.



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4. How will you create value for *all* students?

Think about ways in which students who present with lower skills can have what they bring be a vital part of the classroom, even something the "high performers" can learn from.

For example:

3. Create assignments that draw upon/apply learning to students' lived experiences – let them bring their expertise in.

This could be anything from the hobbies they enjoy to the neighborhoods/cultures they hail from; all students have something to teach their peers.

Just be very careful not to ask students – especially BIPOC students – to be "cultural spokespeople" or "racial educators" for their white classmates. Find out what students *want* to share about who they are and what they have experienced, and make that a part of the activities they do in class.

DLD update to committee (E. Homan)

Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

New Business

Adjournment

Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Submitted by Len Kardon, Chair

Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Correspondence Received

Summary:
Email to SC from J. Swan, Question for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Accountability Subcommittee Meeting, 10-25-21